Seattle
Office of Housing

OH Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative

OH recognizes the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) disproportionately experience housing instability as a result of institutional racism. OH is acknowledging this instability by seeking to invest in organizations and projects that demonstrate a commitment to racial equity. OH utilizes the Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI), a citywide effort to end institutional racism, as a guide to understand how projects and organizations are taking steps to address institutionalized racism. Please respond to the following questions and submit responses to OH ***no later than three weeks prior to the due date for completed NOFA responses***. Applicants can also include responses with submission of the Community Relations Plan or Housing Policies Consistency Checklist. For more information on the Race and Social Justice Initiative or tools go to:

http://www.seattle.gov/rsji/ or http://www.housingconsortium.org/member-programs/racial-equity-project/ "

1. Are there specific steps that your organization has taken to address institutionalized racism or promote racial equity? (e.g. through a strategic planning process, administration of a Race and Social Justice toolkit, leadership and board training, etc.) Please describe:

Since ACLT began working in the Central District, the organization has established itself as a leading voice for equitable development in the City of Seattle, and our vision for inclusive development has already begun to come to fruition with the support of our community partners. Specifically, our work has led to great success at the Liberty Bank Building, an upcoming win at Africatown Plaza and our current work on Africatown at Walker St. Equity has been the key driver in our work on specific policy measures that we have advocated for to changing the landscape of Seattle real estate development to a more inclusive, equitable framework. In August 2019 when ACLT became an independent 501(c)(3) organization we focused on our mission to acquire, steward, and develop land assets necessary for the African diaspora community in Seattle to grow and thrive.

The work of ACLT is directed towards supporting the Black community of Seattle through affordable housing as well as economic development and empowerment. In order to guarantee that our work will provide a community benefit, we develop our projects intentionally through a community co-creation process. This process has allowed our projects to be developed in a way that centers justice and equity by amplifying Black voices and promoting the real needs and aspirations of the community. Our process involves engaging the community in a series of ciphers that span the entire lifecycle of project development: acquisition, development, fundraising, construction, and programming.

Our design ciphers are open to all members of the community, with emphasis placed on Black and low-income individuals, and they are conducted with our architecture partners to get the feedback directly incorporated into the building design process. The purpose of the ciphers is to solicit community input and feedback in a manner that is non-hierarchical and allows all voices to be heard and given equal consideration. These ciphers help ACLT and the architects to test

our assumptions about what the best use of the space is and reevaluate any designs that are not approved of by the community. Outcomes of and feedback from design ciphers, beyond going directly into the design process, also inform our approach to future projects.

2. Are there specific aspects of the proposed project that address institutionalized racism or further race and social equity in Seattle including but not limited to the project location, target population(s), screening criteria, and outreach and marketing efforts? Please describe:

The acquisition of the former Keiro Rehabilitation and Care Center is the result of a hard-fought battle led by community organizers to halt the continued presence of predatory development in the Central District of Seattle. In early July, at the behest of the community, ACLT put its institutional weight behind the community organizing efforts to stop the property from being developed as market rate housing. Following the period of public pressure, the current Keiro Center owners agreed to sell the property to ACLT to be developed as affordable. The Keiro site holds historical significance as it was once used to house Japanese American veterans and since then has provided care for many elders in the Asian community.

In addition to being located Central District of Seattle, where much of Seattle's black community has been displaced. ACLT intends to build a heritage rich, anti-displacement project that honors the communities that have been displaced from the neighborhood, including Indigenous First Nations and Japanese/Pan-Asian communities. Specifically, ACLT will continue to empower coalition partnerships to ensure all communities input is heard during development phases.

The existing building is operating as an interim homeless shelter. Nearly two-thirds of peoples experiencing homelessness in King County are people and families of color. More specifically, the black community is five times more likely to experience homelessness than the white community while the Native American population is seven times more likely. This shelter will respond to the needs of the communities of color experiencing homeless and provide pathways to permanent housing solutions at Keiro and beyond.

We also know access to early childhood education is a barrier for communities of color. In response, Keiro will offer early childhood education with a licensed provider available to tenants and community members.